



State Senator

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VALDE GARCIA

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Coffee Break News

Out-of-state waste standards signed into law

Michigan finally has the out-of-state waste restrictions that residents have been calling for under legislation signed Friday by the governor. The package imposes restrictions on the importation of Canadian and out-of-state waste, sets a two-year moratorium on new landfills, and gives broader authority to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to enforce these tougher garbage standards. The bills provide a comprehensive revision of the state's solid-waste management laws to include additional protections against the disposal of inappropriate waste in Michigan's landfills. The new rules require all Canadian and out-of-state waste to meet the same stringent standards Michigan has for its own waste. Landfills would be required to refuse any out-of-state waste that did not meet the tough standards.

Senate asks for real-time water monitoring system

A resolution urging the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the Office of the Great Lakes to work with the EPA Great Lakes National Program Office to implement a pilot project to provide real-time monitoring of water quality for Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River was adopted by the Senate this week. Developing a real-time monitoring system at strategic locations along the St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair would provide a higher level of protection against chemical threats. The monitoring system also could be used in the future to benefit other vulnerable areas of Michigan and the Great Lakes network.

Senate wants court to uphold "under God" in pledge

A resolution urging the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse a lower court decision and uphold the use of "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance was passed this week by the Senate. The lower court ruling is in direct conflict with the feelings of Americans around the country regarding the use of the pledge and the words "under God." For 50 years Americans have pledged their loyalty to the flag and the United States using the current pledge. The resolution urges the nation's highest court to act quickly to affirm the status of the Pledge of Allegiance as it has been recited for the past five decades.

Lead poisoning prevention package

Two bills of a bi-partisan Senate package amending the Public Health Code and the Social Welfare Act to help reduce and eliminate lead poisoning in Michigan moved out of committee in the House of Representatives and expect to see a floor vote next week. Senate Bill 753 creates a Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control Commission. Responsibilities of the commission include: studying the environmental threats of lead poisoning to the health of children, reviewing the state's current prevention program and developing both long-and short-term recommendations. Senate Bill 756 requires the DCH (in cooperation with the FIA and the Michigan State Housing Authority) to establish and maintain a "lead safe housing registry." According to the EPA, about 900,000 children ages 1 to 5 in the U.S. have a blood-lead level above the level of concern.

Senate votes to establish Michigan Manufacturing Day

The Michigan Senate Thursday voted overwhelmingly to establish Michigan Manufacturing Day. Senate Bill 1026 would declare the third Friday in September as Michigan Manufacturing Day. Manufacturers would be encouraged to open their plants and facilities, and residents would be encouraged to visit and learn about Michigan's manufacturing culture and history. The bill now goes to the House for consideration.

Abstinence-education legislation under discussion

The Senate soon could act on abstinence-education legislation that would give parents a larger role in how public schools teach sex education. It would require students be taught about the responsibility of being a parent, as well as describe adoption as a positive option for unplanned pregnancies and encourage abstinence until marriage. It also would require teaching that abstinence is the only 100 percent effective way to avoid pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases. President George W. Bush has proposed more funding for abstinence programs for teenagers. The legislation would create health-education advisory panels formed by local school boards. The majority of members on the panels would have to be parents of children attending school in the district. Another part of the package would create a complaint process that could result in a 5-percent penalty in school aid for noncompliance.